

Appl. No. : 10/063,599
Filed : May 3, 2002

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REMARKS

In response to the final Office Action dated February 21, 2006, Applicants submitted an RCE and response on June 14, 2006. No further Action has been issued. Further to the final Office Action mailed February 21, 2006, and in supplement to the submission of June 14, 2006, Applicants submit the following Supplemental Response, which Applicants respectfully request be approved for entry into the record.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §101/112 – Utility and Enablement

The PTO has rejected Claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 and § 112 as lacking a specific and substantial asserted utility or a well established utility, and enablement.

Applicants' previous response submitted on June 14, 2006 fully addresses the PTO's arguments. Applicants have also previously submitted declarations and scientific publications that support Applicants' position. The details of the teachings of these declarations and references, and how they support Applicants' asserted utility, are of record and will not be repeated here.

In further support of Applicants' assertions that differential mRNA levels generally lead to corresponding differential protein levels, Applicants submit the following Declaration and remarks as a supplement to those submitted in the response filed June 14, 2006. Applicants enclose herewith a copy of a declaration by Randy Scott, Ph.D. (attached as Exhibit 1). Dr. Scott is an independent expert in the field of molecular diagnostics, with over 15 years experience. He is the author of over 40 scientific publications in the fields of protein biology, gene discovery, and cancer, and is an inventor on several issued patents. His curriculum vitae is attached to the declaration. In paragraph 10 of his declaration, Dr. Scott states:

One reason for the success and wide-spread use of the DNA microarray technique, which has led to the emergence of a new industry, is that generally there is a good correlation between mRNA levels determined by microarray analysis and expression levels of the translated protein. Although there are some exceptions on an individual gene basis, it has been a consensus in the scientific community that elevated mRNA levels are good predictors of increased abundance of the corresponding translated proteins in a particular tissue. Therefore, diagnostic markers and drug candidates can be readily and efficiently screened and identified using this technique, without the need to directly measure individual protein expression levels. Scott Declaration at ¶10 (emphasis added).

Applicants submit the opinion of yet another expert in the field that changes in mRNA level for a particular protein in a given tissue generally lead to a corresponding change in the level of the encoded protein. Importantly, Dr. Scott also states that, contrary to the contentions of the PTO,

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diagnostic markers can be identified "without the need to directly measure individual protein expression levels." This opinion is supported by Dr. Scott's extensive experience in the field, as well as the fact that an entire industry has developed around technology to assess differential mRNA expression. As stated previously, there would be little reason to study changes in mRNA expression levels if those changes did not result in corresponding changes in the encoded protein levels.

Applicants submit that the evidence and arguments of record, as supplemented with the Scott declaration and arguments submitted herein establish that it is more likely than not that one of skill in the art would believe that because the PRO1327 mRNA is differentially expressed in various tumor tissue compared to normal tissue of these same types, the PRO1327 polypeptide will likewise be differentially expressed in these tumors. This differential expression of the PRO1327 polypeptide makes the claimed antibodies useful as diagnostic tools for cancer, particularly esophageal, stomach, lung, rectal and melanoma tumors.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully maintain that claims are patentable and request that they be passed to issue. Applicants invite the Examiner to call the undersigned if any remaining issues may be resolved by telephone.

Please charge any necessary fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: August 24, 2006

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